

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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INSIDE



Comedy Show

Budweiser, the King of Beers, is bringing back by popular demand its Summer Comedy Show featuring the Malafunkshun Boyz this Saturday, June 26, at the Dai Ichi Hotel's Hibiscus Hall.

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BoS Marks 25

Exactly 25 years ago, the Northern Marianas gave birth to financial institution bearing the name of its capital municipality—the Bank of Saipan. Today, the bank looks forward to better times ahead.

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GMA Proclaimed

The Philippine Congress proclaimed incumbent Gloria Mapacagal Arroyo the winner of last month's presidential election early Thursday after an all-night session.

Page 30

Legislature to form conference panel for Verizon sale

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The House and Senate leadership agreed yesterday to form a conference committee that would review and study issues surrounding the sale of Verizon Micronesia.

House information officer Charles Reyes disclosed yesterday that the House of Representatives would meet



on Monday with its Senate counterpart at 2pm to discuss the creation of the conference committee.

The two houses would also identify members of the committee, who would look into the ongoing negotiation between the CNMI government and Pacific Telecom Inc.

"Both Senate and the House are in agreement of the Verizon sale. They are in support of that. This would show that despite differences in opinion, the House and the Senate continue to work together in a cooperative spirit to benefit their constituents," said Reyes.

Reyes said the move to create the conference committee came amid concerns over the magnitude of the requirements

being set by the CNMI government for the sale to go through.

Last week, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Commission rejected Gov. Juan N. Babauta's proposal on the establishment of special enforcement provisions and the imposition of a \$10-million performance bond on Pacific Telecoms Inc., once it acquires control

See LEGISLATURE on Page 12

Azmar: It's not 93-7 profit sharing

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER



LIBERTY DONES

Despite their very public disagreements over the fate of pozzolan mining on Pagan, you would never notice it the way visiting mining proponent Kenneth Moore, president of Azmar International Trading Co. CNMI, left, and Association of Northern Island Residents leader Cintia Kaipat huddle up during a recess in Thursday's Marianas Public Lands Board of Directors meeting on Saipan.

DPS' Camacho wants to ban tint on cars

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety is pushing for a ban on the use of tint on vehicles in hopes of decreasing the number of traffic accidents in the Commonwealth.

According to DPS commissioner Edward Camacho, the issue has been brought up with the Legislature.

"I am pushing forth with the Legislature that we get to rid of [tint on cars]," he said. "We just have to have them all removed, even the unmarked law enforcement vehicles."

Camacho said he wants this done due to increase in traffic accidents in the CNMI, most of them caused by the limited visibility afforded by tinted windows of vehicles.

"When you are driving a fully tinted vehicle at night, it is very difficult to see, even if the headlights are on bright, and that gets worse once it starts to rain. The tint adds more limited visibility to the operator of the vehicle. This [ban on tinted cars] is just to promote safety and going back to having visual contact and communication between vehicle operators."

Camacho said communication between drivers was a practice in the past; however, due to the installation of tints, this has decreased.

"In the past, we made eye contact with the other operator and not just rely on signal lights or the speed of the car; that enables us to know the intensity of the other operator, but now we can't do that because of the tints," he said.

The department chief said he expects many to oppose the measure, but expects

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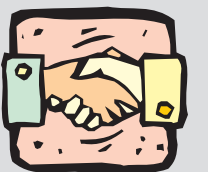
CNMI-Indonesia to sign MOU on friendship

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

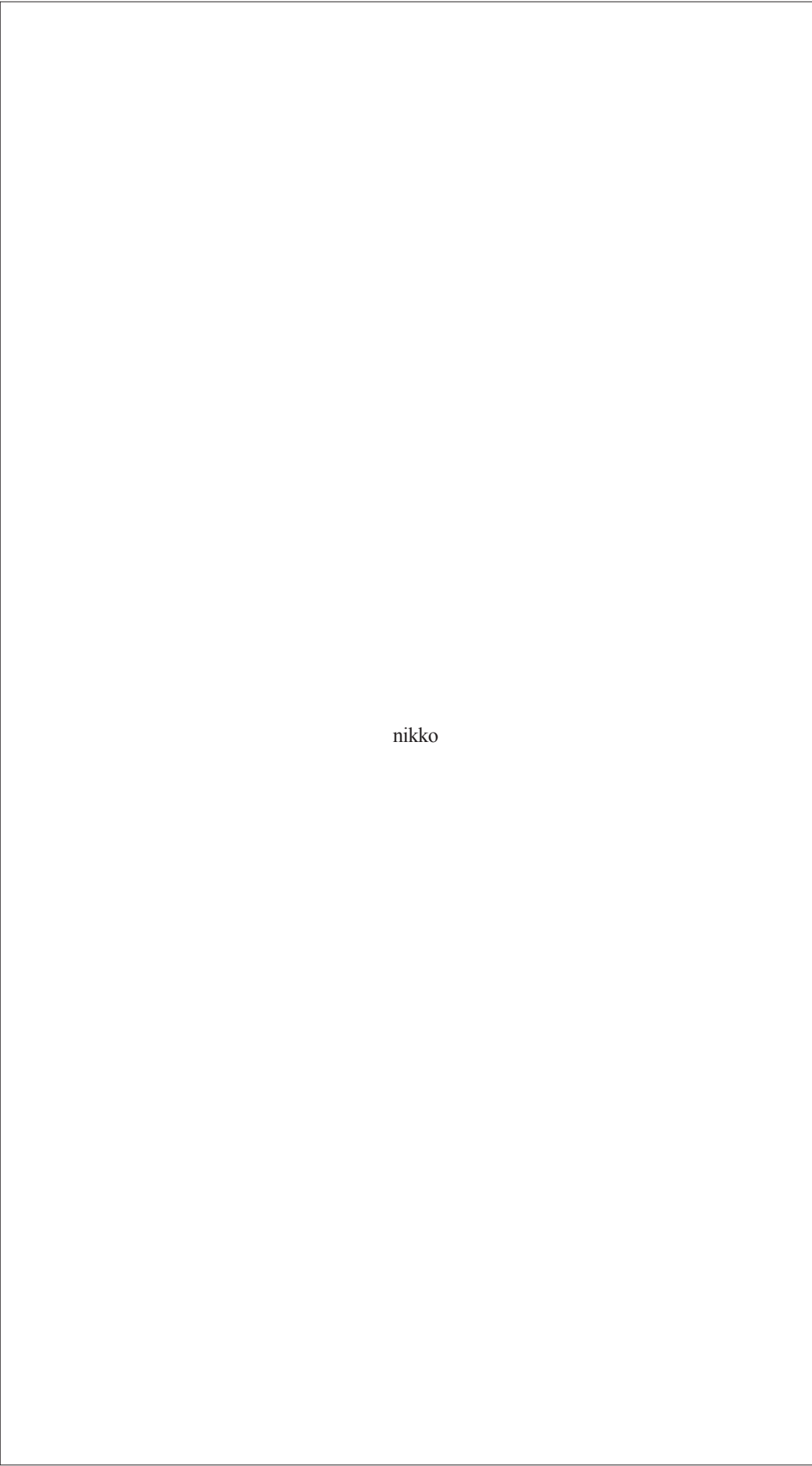
Gov. Juan N. Babauta and visiting Indonesian representatives would sign today a memorandum of understanding memorializing the friendly ties between the Commonwealth and the predominantly Muslim Asian republic.

Leading the Indonesian delegation is Alex S.W. Retraubun, director for Small Islands Development of

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Local



nikko



diabetes
+green

‘FairPay an opportunity to correct personnel policies’

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER



The implementation of the FairPay initiative is a good opportunity for employers to correct personnel policies “without questions,” according to private lawyer Marcia Schultz. “This is an opportunity to correct policies without raising people’s eyebrows,” she said in a forum Wednesday.

In her presentation before the Society of Human Resource Management, Schultz recommended that employers audit their workplace or review and revise the classification of their employees.

She said employers can convert low-paid supervisory personnel and others earning less than \$455 a week and those misclassified employees to non-exempt status.

She said payroll practices should also be reviewed.

“Review sample payroll runs for salary of part-time and other workers and \$455 a week threshold. Make sure they are complying with the salary basis test,” she said.

She urged employers to train managers and payroll workers to avoid impermissible deductions.

Schultz also advised employers to review and revise job descriptions: to better describe actual duties and emphasize exempt duties.

“This may not come easy because you have to sit down with your employees [and explain to them the changes and the need for them],” she said.

She said employers also need to revise policies and employee handbooks to comply with the salary basis test, allow disciplinary deductions in full-day increments, and define the workweek.

A revised handbook should distinguish policies for exempt workers from nonexempt, salaried and hourly workers, and add in a “safe harbor” policy to allow correction of improper deductions.

Schultz said that, while the regulations have yet to be implemented and may be subject to changes by the U.S. Congress, “it’s better to start preparing now.”

The U.S. Department of Labor said the newly adopted federal regulations give employers an option to either pay certain work-

ers \$455 a week or keep them at their present salary level but give them overtime benefits if they work beyond their work time.

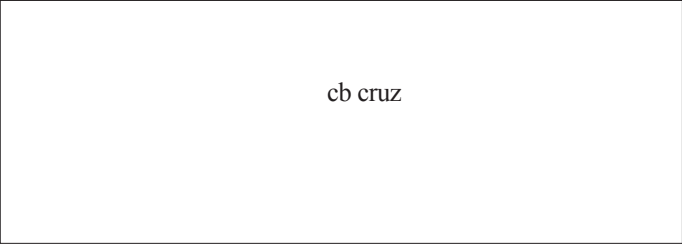
U.S. DOL wage and hour division investigator Richard L. Hamilton said a weekly rate is de-




















termined by multiplying the current monthly pay by 12 months and dividing it by 52 weeks. Anything that exceeds 40 hours must be paid overtime which is equivalent to no less than 1.5 times the regular rate.

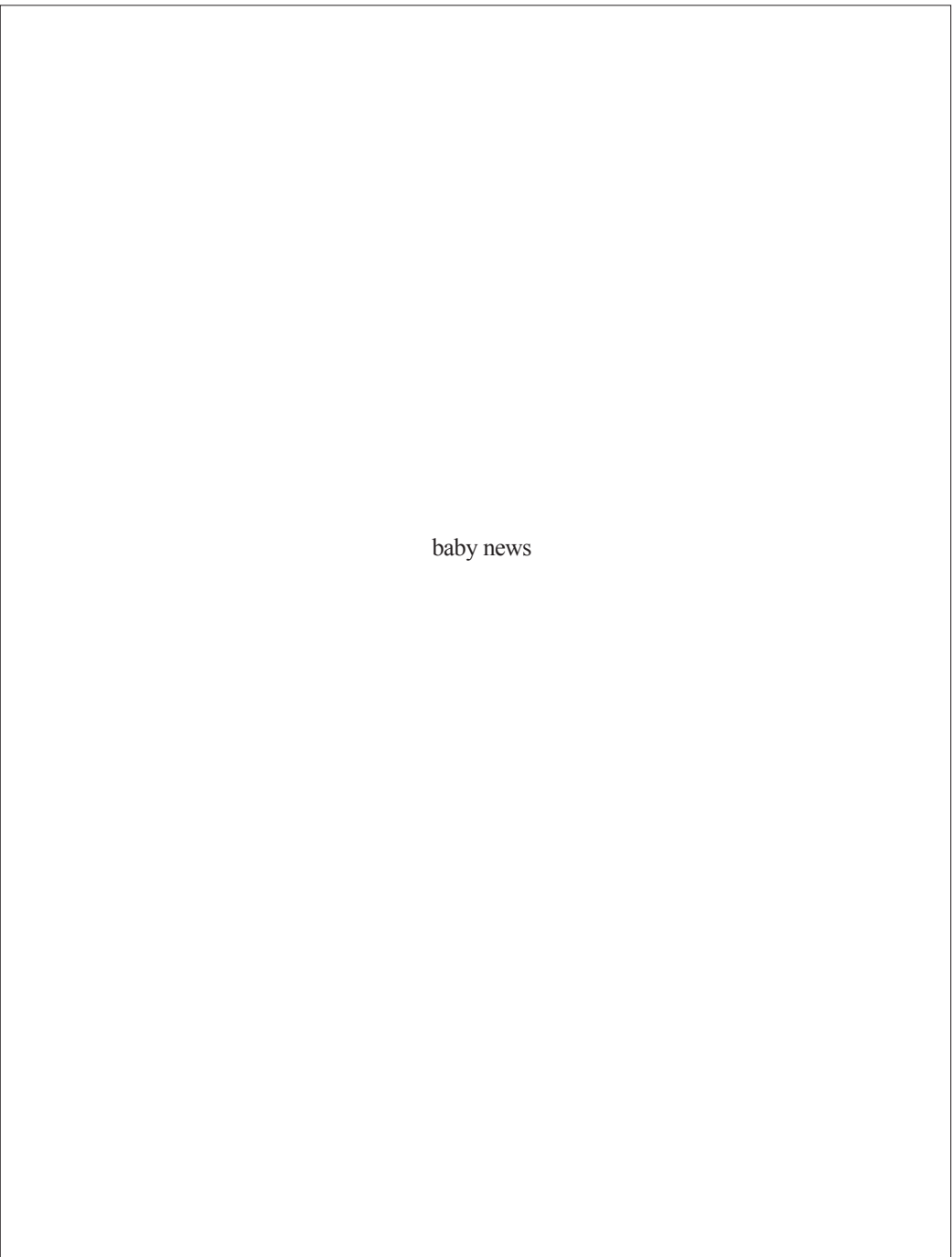
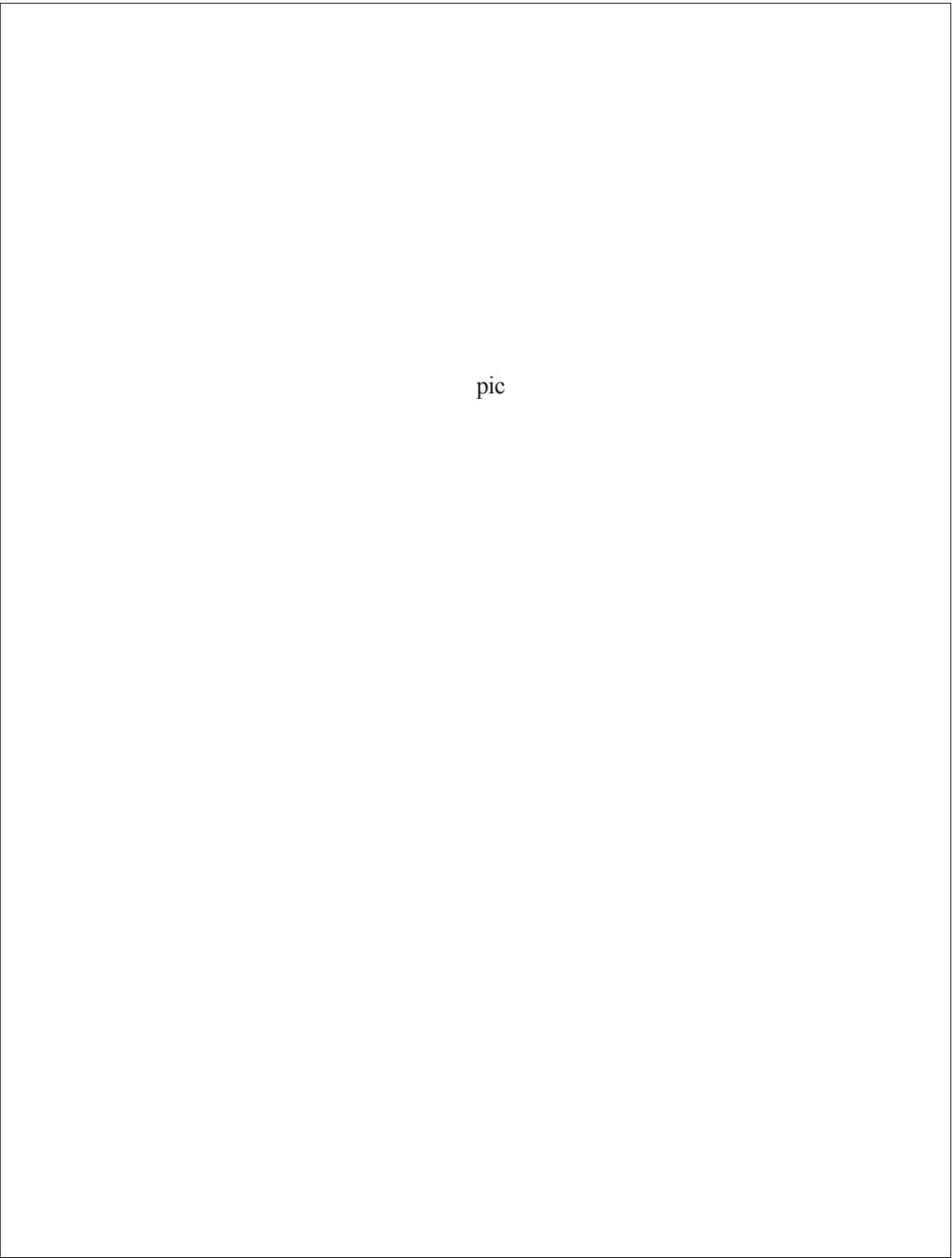
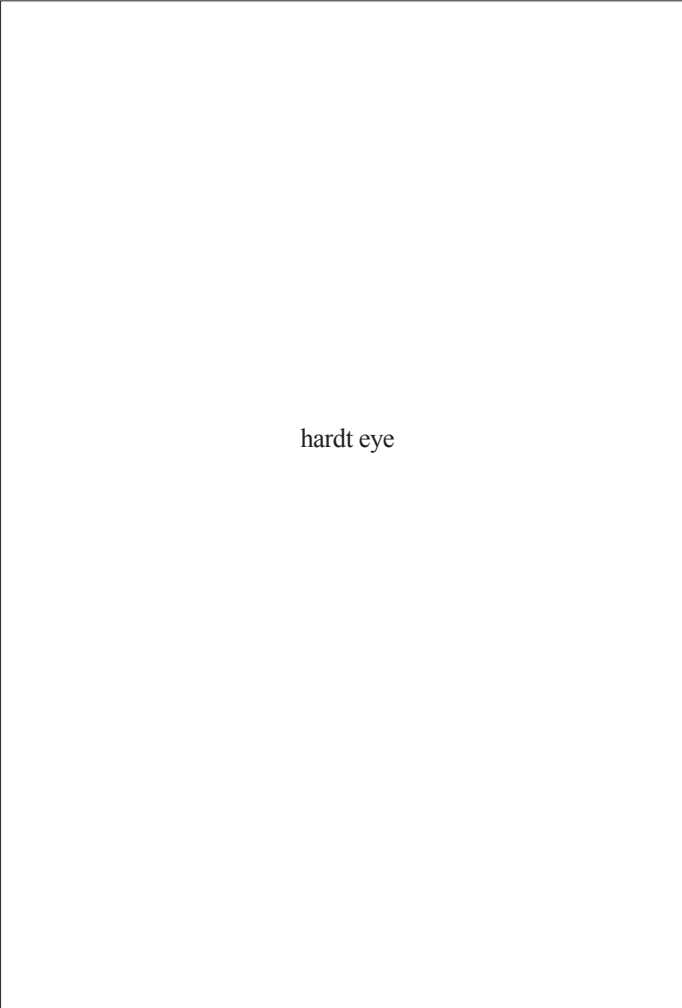
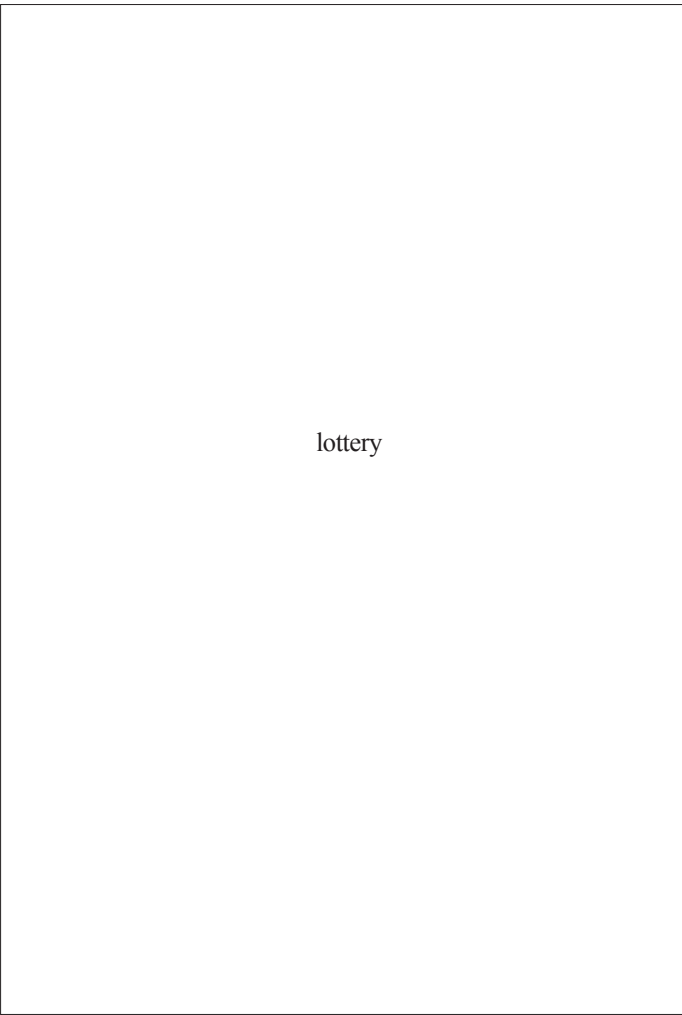
This is part of the new rules that the U.S. DOL had issued under the part 541 regulation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which requires the payment of overtime pay to the exempt group of employees—executive, adminis-

trative, and professional—who receive \$23,660 a year and below. The new policy will take effect on Aug. 23, 2004.

Currently, only those employees earning \$8,060 annually or less are guaranteed overtime pay.



City	Forecast	High	Low
 Auckland	Partly Cloudy	53F (12C)	40F (4C)
 Beijing	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	66F (19C)
 Hong Kong	Cloudy	90F (32C)	80F (27C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	75F (24C)
 London, England	Rain	61F (16C)	52F (11C)
 Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	80F (27C)	62F (17C)
 Manila	Thunder	93F (34C)	84F (29C)
 Melbourne	Cloudy	55F (13C)	46F (8C)
 Miami	Thunder	91F (33C)	79F (26C)
 New York City	Sunny	84F (29C)	66F (19C)
 Osaka	Partly Cloudy	77F (25C)	65F (18C)
 Paris	Thunder	64F (18C)	51F (11C)
 Pusan	Partly Cloudy	78F (26C)	66F (19C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	81F (27C)	63F (17C)
 Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	81F (27C)	52F (11C)
 San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	62F (17C)	52F (11C)
 Seoul	Cloudy	83F (28C)	63F (17C)
 Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	74F (23C)
 Washington, DC	Showers	82F (28C)	68F (20C)



seastar

las vegas
+yellow

US Embassy, Tokyo, Dec. 7, 1941

There are thousands of stories related to personal experiences in World War II and while many are tragic in the extreme, others involve circumstances and events that are interesting from the point of view of simply being of human interest.

After the war many who had been in the United States military continued their government service and joined the State Department and other agencies of the United States Government. I met many of these veterans while serving as a foreign service officer in various American Embassies. These were men who were nearing retirement and their positions were being filled by younger employees such as myself.

One such person I shall always remember while serving with the State Department told me of an episode which occurred at the American Embassy in Tokyo in the early days of the war.

He recalled that the dependents of the Embassy staff were ordered by the State Department to leave Japan in April of that year as the political situation between the United States and Japan was deteriorating rapidly.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war on December 8th while still in Tokyo he was visited by a Japanese officer who looked around the Embassy compound and saw several Japanese civil-

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Military Historical Cartographer



ians who were employed as gardeners, cooks and maids. The Japanese officer ordered them to leave stating, "our countries are now at war and such luxuries will not be permitted among American Embassy employees", and he ordered the Japanese domestic employees to leave the Embassy compound and not to return. He then told the Americans that they could not leave the compound and that an exchange of diplomats



was being arranged. This trade later took place in West Africa where the Japanese diplomats who had been stationed in Washington (including Japanese negotiators Ambassador Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura and Saburo Kurusu) were exchanged for the American Embassy staff that had been assigned to Japan. This particular Japanese officer had a habit of dropping by the Embassy compound as he liked to practice speaking English. One day he brought an English language newspaper with the headline, "Guam Falls", and remarked that Singapore,

Hong Kong and Hawaii would be next and that Japanese forces would land troops on the United States' west coast. My friend, Bill, recalled his reply, "Colonel you will never take Singapore as the city is protected by a large British garrison as well as huge naval coastal batteries, it will never fall." With that exchange the Japanese officer abruptly left. Several days later he returned and again held up an English language newspaper in which the headline read, "Singapore Falls." "What do you think of that?" asked the officer. Being extremely depressed at the news, Bill replied, "So Singapore has fallen - well Colonel maybe you will take Hawaii - and maybe you will land troops on the west coast of the United States - but I'll tell you here and now - I'll go down with my country." With that the Japanese officer stood up, slapped Bill on the back and said, "spoken like a man" and walked out the door. Several hours later the Japanese house boys and maids returned to work in the compound. Months later, while standing on the roof of his quarters in Tokyo, Bill heard aircraft flying overhead and looked up and thought he saw the red wing insignia of the Japanese Air Force, but all of a sudden bombs started to fall on the city -- it was April 18, 1942, and it was Jimmy Dolittle and his "Tokyo Raiders" flying over the city in their B-25 Mitchell Bombers from the aircraft carrier Hornet. The red "meatball" Bill thought he saw was actually the red center of the old Army Air Force wing insignia which was later changed to a plain white star.

There are many interesting stories that relate to the war, it was later learned that very little damage was done by the bombing attack. Fearing that the Army's top secret Norden Bomb Sight would fall into the hands of the Japanese, the attack was carried out with a 20 cent, sheet metal device that resembled a protractor with a sighting arm. I well remember hearing the news of the attack on the radio, in fact it was the first good news we had received since Pearl Harbor and it certainly boosted the morale of the American people in those dark days of 1942.



eye clinic



microl
+red

Opinion

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Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Same tired, old speeches

For nearly three decades now, we've heard tired speeches about (addressing) water shortages here. We're far off the mark from resolution because we're stuck in the mud of address.

The speeches are as empty as the water pipes emplaced in Garapan, San Jose, Susupe, As Lito, As Perdido, San Vicente and Chalan Kanoa Villages.

Then came a new form of government solution: establishment of a water task force to address water problems island-wide. CUC pitched in by planning to retain a consultant to study more water problems we already know. It's a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

The basic premise is: islands throughout the Pacific have small water lenses or aquifers. Island communities suffer from the lack of water in prolonged drought season. It means far less water in aquifers to meet the growing demands of the community. But we've also employed Chamorro Logic by drilling more water wells around the same source only to pump brackish water during the dry season.

The obvious dilemma is the continuing expansion of this community. It needs more water to feed new residential developments, islandwide. The seeming answer is to proceed with desalination of salt water. Otherwise, we may have to revert to building more outside toilets to mitigate the lack of water.

Gentlemen, please spare us the same tired old intramural speeches that are as empty as the pipes in the villages, speeches that have been regurgitated for nearly 30 years.

John S. DelRosario Jr.
Koblerville

A response to Senator Reyes

Let me respond to Sen. Pete P. Reyes in the same venue in which he made his remarks (in the June 8 issue of this paper). Senator Reyes was unhappy that I did not consult with him prior to my voicing an opinion in my column, On My Mind (found on the web and in this paper's Sunday edition), about his reaction to the governor's veto of three of Senator Reyes' bills. The senator claimed that the vetoes were a personal reaction by the governor, and I disagreed.

Senator, I do not own a TV set. I get my information mainly from reading the two local papers. I often do call parties for information related to subjects I write about, and often obtain copies of, and read, related documents as well.

I did not do so in this case because, to the best of my recollection, in all the coverage given your unhappiness with the governor's vetoes, not once was any substantive argument included about the issues regarding Senate Bill 14-11, Senate Draft 1, which concerned DNA testing in paternity suits. There was no clue that the governor's reasoning was in error, and that your objections did, indeed, have factual grounds.

I know you are articulate, and do not hesitate to voice your opinion. Since I found no explanation of your position in the papers I made the assumption that, therefore, there were no real grounds for the position you were taking on this bill.

The other two bills that were vetoed—one, proposing to abolish celebration of President's Day so as to observe Martin Luther King day, and the other proposing to restrict Marianas Visitors Authority's hiring of nonresident workers—are both more a matter of opinion than a matter of fact, and there did not seem a need for further clarification.

I realize that there is a risk in depending on what the newspapers report and what they don't, on what approach they take. But I simply don't have the resources to verify every piece of newspaper-provided data that I use.

On the bright side, at least now, with your detailed explanation of why SB 14-11 should not have been vetoed, we may all understand what the real issue is. Indeed, perhaps it will encourage legislators to override the veto of this bill. It's a pity the explanation wasn't provided sooner.

Senator, I meant no disrespect. Our relationship has been a respectful one, and I hope it continues that way.

Ruth L. Tighe
Tanapag, Saipan

Why Reagan is a legend

If the Commonwealth had to pick a hero, Ronald Reagan would be a good choice. After all, it was President Reagan who conferred U.S. citizenship on the island folks, an act that has been followed by a gravy train of sweet moolah that puts the financial sucrose in the term Uncle Sugar.

Of course, if you go anywhere near the English-language media, they have soured the sweetness of Reagan's dignified stature by grinding in into mush with the millstones of Posthumous Saturation Coverage. Among all the romp in the pomp, though, I've gotten a lot of email questions from foreign readers, many of them workers or managers on Saipan, who are trying to gauge the American psyche on this matter. Namely, this: "What's the deal with Ronald Reagan? Why was he so popular?"

Well, that's a fair question. Let me see if I can cook up a fair answer.

You can't separate a man from his times, and Reagan secured the presidency in really bleak times for the United States. Not bleak as in crisis of Great Depression or WWII proportions, but bleak as in a vague and all encompassing despair, like a wet blanket had settled over the nation and was slowly smothering everyone's hopes. President Jimmy Carter just wasn't hitting the right buttons there in the Oval Office.

Inflation was roaring out of control, and I remember well those double-digit interest rates and the obscene, wealth-depleting costs of my parents' mortgage and car payments as they sweat the bills each month.

A gas crisis hit, and was countered with total incompetence.

And on the geopolitical stage, a handful of rag-tag Iranian yahoos holding U.S. hostages managed to geld Uncle Sam, while Carter looked like a deer frozen in headlights.

No disrespect intended to Mr. Carter, since he is a man of great intelligence and character. He just had lousy luck in Washington. And he had no knack for economics.

Still, lousy luck is, well, lousy, and economics is mighty unforgiving of messing up, and any way you looked at it back then, U.S.

Examining the local mom-and-pop phenomenon

Q •Hafa Adai! I look forward to reading your column everyday and one thing for sure, you are truly impartial and that I surely appreciate. I have a few concerns that I would like to share with you and hopefully will be able to see you address one or two in your column.

A good number of mom-and-pop stores are operating businesses in small spaces with very limited merchandise and obviously run and managed daily by family members or attendants who could barely communicate in English. It just makes me wonder; how and in what ways do such businesses contribute to the CNMI economy. Are they simply operating such businesses as a front just so they can continue residing in the CNMI? I am sure that their income verse their living expenses is a big negative. Or are they reporting their business gross income?

Certainly, I am pleased to hear of your great interest—like many others—in my Q & A column. My purpose for this column is to enhance public awareness on issues of common interest in the community. It's my goal is to build a strong enough pressure from a well-informed public to compel the policymakers to develop and follow a socio-economic development plan that charts a successful development path for the people of the CNMI.

Let me begin my answer to your question by highlighting the socio-economic significance of small businesses, the so-called "mom-and-pop enterprises." This type of small business is primarily operated by the owner and his/her family members. Small businesses employ almost 60 percent of America's workers, contribute 50 percent of sales and account for half of private sector output. According to published government data, small and family owned businesses represented 98 percent of all U.S. employers, generated the third-largest economy in the world and contributed 50 percent of the gross domestic product in year 2000. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, small firms made up nearly 90 percent of all exporters and produced one-fifth of the known export value in 2001. For that matter no national political leader can afford to ignore policies aimed at addressing the issues concerning mom-and-pop enterprises. Thus, invariably every federal administration has declared policies to improve the economic security of small businesses, provide them help to meet challenges by improving access to capital, ease the tax burden, expand the opportunity of access to new markets, make technology and information work for small businesses and help them in implementing policies that value families. However, development of specific policies addressing issues of small businesses by our lo-

By **ED STEPHENS**

Ed Stephens, Jr. is an economist and columnist for the Saipan Tribune. "Ed4Saipan@yahoo.com"



policy—economic, military, whatever—was an utter disaster. Want to understand Reagan's popularity? You have to understand this first. It's a context thing.

And then Ronald Reagan appeared and he turned things around. The smothering blanket was lifted. The sun came out. Things got better. That's what happened. The details don't matter.

Meanwhile, consider that TV is the center of life in the USA, where the average American now watches 5.3 hours per day (yes, per DAY) of television. Reagan wasn't the first TV president, but he was the best. He was telegenic. He was poised. He had an obvious sense of humor. He was dignified, but not stuffy, not cocky, not glib, not pompous. He seemed bigger than the title of President, not the other way around.

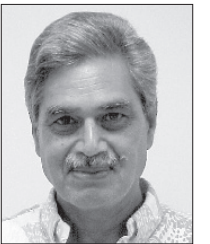
He seemed bigger than life, really, which is why so many people were so shaken a few days ago when they found that he wasn't.

Personally, there were some Reagan policies that I did not mesh with. Not everyone in his administration was on my warm-and-fuzzy list. But, so what? He was still a great among greats. In fact, in contemplating the man's legacy, perhaps the best reflection on him is who his shrill and vocal enemies are. If screeching neurotics, child molesters, and welfare queens go apoplectic at the mention of his name...well....that puts points in Reagan's favor right there.

Ronald Reagan is an American legend, who was legendarily good to the people of the Commonwealth, too.

By **MOHAMMAD ASHRAF, PH.D.**

Ashraf is an International Resource Economist. He is solely responsible for the views expressed in this column and doesn't represent the views of Saipan Tribune. His email address is ashmdr@hotmail.com



cal government may yet be in its infancy.

Further, I will mention some specific steps taken under the Clinton administration where the Small Business Administration doubled its loan volume to small businesses in three years. With no drop in loans to other business owners, the number of guaranteed loans to women-owned businesses was quadrupled. The 1993 Economic Plan made 90 percent of small businesses eligible for tax relief, helping them to keep money needed for growth. Also, targeted tax preference for capital gains, reduced record keeping requirements, raised the small business expense limit for equipment by 75 percent and extended the Research and Experimentation Tax Credit, reduced the burden of regulatory enforcement, overhauled export controls, and made it easier for small firms to do business with the federal government during the same time.

Similar policies such as tax write-offs for small businesses recently enacted by the Minimum Wage Increase Act, regulatory relief and reduction in paperwork requirements, easier access to needed capital, provision of health care insurance and retirement savings plans for employers and employees are continuing under the current administration of President Bush.

Why are mom-and-pop or family businesses more appreciated by the community, compared with the bigger chain store businesses? The reasons include the effectiveness of family teams, positive customer perceptions of family ownership, willingness of family members to sacrifice for their enterprise, trust among family members, commitment to integrity and reputation, family support and more. Family businesses enable people to work hard for something more important than either opportunity or ego and that's family reputation.

Among the economic benefits of these businesses, studies show that the externally owned firms tend to purchase products from distant suppliers and channel profits to distant owners in other regions, thus generating smaller local multiplier effects than homegrown businesses. The addition of one new small firm results in an overall

See EXAMINING on Page 8

5,572 lbs of toxic chemicals released in NMI

Some 5,572 pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the air, land and water in the CNMI in 2002, but the volume is lower compared to releases in most states and territories throughout the U.S.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the information came from its Toxics Release Inventory, which ranked the CNMI as the 56th in the nation in terms of total releases.

Dean Higuchi of the EPA's Hawaii office explained that the TRI data reflect numbers submitted to the EPA by businesses and industries. The inventory is an annual measure of toxic chemical releases, transfers and wastes generated by facilities in the U.S.

Higuchi said that facilities with elevated toxic release levels are not necessarily out of compliance with local and federal regulations.

"TRI continues to be a useful tool for states, counties and communities to know what types and amounts of chemicals are present in their neighborhoods," a media release quoted EPA Region 9 administrator Wayne Nastri as saying.

Higuchi said the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act requires data reporting to encourage facilities to reduce toxic chemical releases to environment.

The EPA's TRI program measures releases of about 650 toxic chemicals. Higuchi said manufacturers began reporting releases in 1987, while federal facilities followed suit beginning 1994.

Seven industries began reporting release data to the EPA beginning 1998. Higuchi said these industries include electricity generation, commercial hazardous waste treatment, petroleum bulk terminals, wholesale chemical distributors, metal and coal mining, and solvent recovery. *(John Ravelo)*

Pozzolan mining not on MPLA's agenda

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

A crowd of guests, lawmakers and residents sat cheek by jowl at the Marianas Public Lands Authority conference room yesterday in anticipation of the board's discussion on the controversial pozzolan mining on Pagan. Contrary to the expectation, though, the board set aside the topic.

"It's not in our agenda today," said MPLA board chairperson Ana Demapan-Castro.

For his part, Arizona-based businessman Kenneth Moore, president of Azmar International and Trading Co. CNMI, said that he traveled to Saipan this week mainly to discuss the project with local authorities.

He said he also believed that the MPLA board would discuss the issue in yesterday's meeting.

Demapan-Castro said the board would tackle the issue in its next board meeting, which may take place next month.

"The board is really pushing to put this behind us, to make a decision either to approve it or disapprove it. But as of today, we're not going to take any action," said the chair.

She also denied rumors that the Azmar contract "is a done deal."

"There's a lot of talk going on ... that MPLA is doing this, doing that. I was told this morning that it's a done deal.

I don't know anything about that," said Demapan-Castro.

As far as Azmar is concerned, she said it has not shown that it has the financial capability to undertake the project. "As of today, we've not received those documents that we've requested. There's nothing."

The board earlier dared Azmar to "show us the money."

For his part, Moore said that some financial documents were submitted yesterday "and the rest are [available but] highly confidential."

"It's my personal financial statement. They can be submitted as to terms and conditions of the permit," said Moore.

Rep. Joseph Guerrero once again expressed his distaste of Moore, whom he said he had first met in 1998 when he was still the executive director of the Historical Preservation Office.

During the public comment period in yesterday's meeting, Guerrero disclosed that after warning the MPLA board about Moore early on, he received a call from Moore's lawyer allegedly threatening to sue him for libel.

"I was very disappointed that after I aired my opinion during the board's meeting on Tinian, I was called by Mr. Moore's attorney threatening me," said Guerrero.

Guerrero also said that he has received e-mails showing Moore's "disrespect for authorities" in the CNMI.

In an interview, Moore indicated that he would rather leave Guerrero's issue with his lawyer. When pressed, he said his lawyer merely contacted Guerrero "and suggested that I was quite displeased."

"He accused me of breaking federal laws. That's a very damaging statement," Moore told reporters.

Guerrero, during an MPLA board meeting on Tinian a few months back, talked of what he described as a bad encounter with Moore.

He told the board "to be very cautious and careful with who you are dealing [with] here."

He warned the board of Moore's "empty promises."

Guerrero claimed that Moore violated local and federal regulations when he first came to the CNMI in the 1990s to retrieve a B-29 wreckage in the Northern Islands. Guerrero said Moore failed to honor his agreement with HPO not to move or take anything from the site.

He said that Moore took a World War II B-29 machine gun "in violation of our regulations."

Moore came to the CNMI primarily to trace a downed WW II aircraft in Northern Islands that was piloted by his uncle.

Moore said the machine gun remains at the CNMI Museum.

DPS

From Page 1

plained that an alternative to tinting is currently available and should be used instead.

"People argue that the reason why they use tint is because it keeps the sun and heat out. There are all kinds of dangers that goes with that, though. [But] there's already a tinting system in place right now—a tint chemical—where you don't even have to darken the windshield. Put the tint chemical on the windshield and that will repel the heat, and the car will be as cool as if there's no sun out."

Camacho explained that implementing the measure is necessary to comply with federal laws.

"We receive federal money to fix our highways and to enforce the laws on our streets, and one of the requirement is for us to comply with federal law

that says no tint. Only the factory-made tints on vehicles are to be allowed and nothing more," he said.

Further, the commissioner said he understands the use of tints for "law enforcement type operations."

Annual statistics show that traffic related crashes increased in the CNMI from 2002 to 2003. A total of 3,168 accidents complaints were reported last year, an increase of 723 over that of 2002's 2,445 traffic related crashes.

Of the over 3,000 complaints, 311 occurred in December, the most compared to other months in the year. The month with the least number of crashes was February, with 229. Unlike 2002, each month in 2003 had over 200 complaints. The biggest difference between the two years was found in March—66 in 2002 and 263 in 2003—and August—81 in 2002 and 266 in 2003.

Reports by month are as follows:

	2002	2003
January	218	286
February	200	229
March	66	263
April	156	243
May	176	264
June	194	262
July	190	240
August	81	266
September	215	256
October	251	267
November	215	281
December	283	311

The statistics also indicated that a total of 378 persons under the age of 22 years old were involved in the crashes, while 1,126 were between the ages of 22-56 years. The age group featuring the most victims was 56 and above, which had a total number of 1,249 patients, resulting in a total of 4,081 victims in 2003.

AZMAR

From Page 1

sales of \$40 and a production cost of \$30, the CNMI would get \$632 million while Azmar would get \$1.4 billion. This is based on a 7 percent royalty fee, 5 percent BGR tax and other fees for land lease.

He said that when the price is \$70 and the cost is \$30, the CNMI gets \$1.3 billion and Azmar gets \$6.6 billion. At a production cost of \$10, the CNMI gets \$1.5 billion and Azmar gets \$10.5 billion, and so on.

Chamorro.com, run by Chamorros in San Francisco, California, said the proposal is flawed because "the CNMI's share is always the same, 7 percent, no matter what the cost of production is, and after covering the cost of production, Azmar always gets 93 percent."

The Association of Northern Islands Residents has also warned the MPLA against rushing into any mining deal. The group cited a report that more than 200 million tons of high-grade pozzolan are on Pagan, believed to be worth \$45 to \$70 per ton at today's prices.

"No one knows the true market

value," said the group, but noted that "this is not a matter of a few thousand dollars. This is potentially a matter of billions of dollars."

For his part, Farrell, who attended the meeting with Azmar president Kenneth Moore and other local representatives, said that Azmar's proposal has "excellent terms for both sides."

He cited that prices for finished Portland cement is \$53 per ton. "And we know that there is no established [international] market for pozzolan," said Farrell.

He said the company has the local community in mind ever since it made the proposal.

He said that Azmar's original plan called for Pagan resettlement and pozzolan mining development project, which involved a \$3.5 million budget for the construction of basic infrastructure in the area. The mining project, he said, would employ only local and U.S. citizens.

Farrell said Azmar is asking for a two-year mining permit "to begin the process."

He said the project would require some 5,200 employees during the first six months.

CNMI

From Page 1

Indonesia's Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Retraubun's jurisdiction encompasses almost all of the 17,500 islands of Indonesia.

"We learn how the CNMI develops the islands here," Retraubun said. "We have so many islands much better than Bali."

Retraubun and six other Indonesian delegates visited the CNMI to attend two major conferences involving U.S.-affiliated Pacific islands—the 2004 All Islands Coastal Zone Management sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Pacific Islands Environment Conference sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Retraubun said learning from the CNMI experience and those of other Pacific islands would provide useful ideas on how to develop Indonesia's small islands. The government agency where Retraubun belongs is relatively new in Indonesia.

USAID Coastal Resources Management project deputy chief of party Stacey A. Tighe, Ph.D, said the Indonesian delegation and Babauta would sign the "MOU of special friendship" today at the Governor's Office.

She said the delegation wants to build a relationship of cooperation with the

CNMI on environmental issues, particularly coastal management, and tourism. The delegation was set to meet last night with Marianas Visitors Authority chair David Sablan and other members of the MVA board to discuss about developing a tourism strategy, Tighe added.

Sablan said the Indonesian group wants to know about the MVA's functions and how it manages to lure visitors from Japan, Korea and China.

"Internally, we designate attractive sites and maintain those sites. There are at least 80 sites on Saipan, and about 25 each on Rota and Tinian," Sablan said.

Tighe recognized that the CNMI has many selling points to tourists, citing the presence of signages and the use of the English language for communication, as well as the beautiful sceneries and pristine beaches. "You can go for the view or you can go for the wet," she said.

Besides Retraubun and Tighe, the Indonesian delegation includes Tourism professor Bet El Silisna Lagarensen, Bureau of Planning and Development director Alexander Johnnes Wowor, Bureau of Planning and Development of Bitung City Theodore Vanny Lumingkewas, Office of Environment Management of Manado City's Boyke Ferry, and Joudy Ruddy Rizal Sangari, the head of Coastal Resources and Management on Integrated Coastal Resources Management Board of North Sulawesi.

LEGISLATURE

From Page 1

over Verizon's local operation from Micronesian Telecommunications Corp.

This development narrows the dispute arising from the Governor's intervention in the application for the approval of the sale to two issues—the financial audit to be completed by Deloitte and Touche to determine financial capa-

bility and Verizon's monopoly of the CNMI's fiber optic cable.

CTC chairman Norman Tenorio, commissioners Mike Fitzgerald and Josephine Mesta unanimously voted to reject Babauta's and CNMI consumer counsel Brian Caldwell's joint proposal on the enforcement provisions and bond requirement, inching the Verizon transaction a step closer to possible approval by the CTC.

DEQ raises red flag on Rota beach site

The Division of Environmental Quality has raised the red flag on a beach site on Rota after samples collected from the location was found to contain excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria.

The agency said that samples it collected from District #2 Storm Drainage, Guata Beach showed high concentrations of enterococci bacteria that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

“Therefore, in order to adequately address public health concerns, DEQ has given the location a red flag and advises the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of the [site] for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified,” said the agency in a statement.

DEQ analyzes samples of marine recreational and storm drainage water from 12 locations on Rota Island every week.

The agency has also analyzed water samples collected from Tinian’s recreational beaches and storm water drainages and none of the samples collected contained excessive concentration of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The U. S. Army recently welcomed three young people from the CNMI into its ranks. From left to right, Derek M. Castro of DanDan , Abigail Evangelista of Tinian and Vincent A. Duenas of Koblerville.

3 NMI residents join US Army

Three residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands recently joined the U. S. Army, according to Sergeant First Class Christopher Cooper, commander of the U. S. Army recruiting Station on Guam.

Vincent A. Duenas of Koblerville, son of Joan Duenas, enlisted with the Military Occupational Skill of 19K- M1 Abrams Armor Crewman. He will be going to Fort Knox, Kentucky for his Initial Active Duty Training.

Derek M. Castro of DanDan, son of Daniel and Dorothy Castro, enlisted with the MOSI of 63B - Light Wheel Vehicle Mechanic. He will be going to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, for his Initial Active Duty Training.

Abigail Evangelista of Tinian, daughter of Antonio and Evelyn Evangelista, enlisted with the MOS of 42A - Human Resources Specialist. She will take her initial training at Ft Jackson, South Carolina.

Young men and women interested in learning more about Army and Army Reserve opportunities should contact Staff Sergeant Abadam at the U. S. Army Recruiting Station in Guam at (671) 689-7621. Send e-mail to albert.abadam@usarec.army.mil.

Information about Army Opportunities can also be obtained on the Internet at <http://www.goarmy.com>

Typhoon Dianmu delays Magicland

Magicland’s arrival on Saipan will be delayed by a few days due to the untimely advent of Supertyphoon Dianmu. However, the bigger and better-than-ever Magicland 2004 is definitely on its way and is now scheduled to open at the Hopwood Junior High School on Sunday, June 27.

Fantastic entertainment, 14 super carnival rides and an array of games—great, wholesome fun and excitement for the whole family, especially the children—await one and all.

Magicland guests will be entertained by free ‘mini shows’ throughout the evening, including clowns, Polynesian dancing, magic acts and our internationally renowned and beautiful contortionist “Jasmine”, according to impresario Tupa’i Bruno Loyale. Magicland will open daily at 5pm.

Magicland claims that its array of 14 great rides and eight unique carnival games is the largest and best anywhere in the Pacific.

“This year we really have something for everyone, from the smallest children to the most brave-hearted adults, said Loyale. “We’re bringing back many of your favorite rides from last year plus the thrilling new ‘Rock-o-Plane’ and hair-raising ‘Octopus’ for the truly adventurous.”

For additional information about Magicland 2004 contact Dick Beaulieu in Fiji at (679) 672-0600; fax 672-5064; or email islmedia@connect.com.fj.

northern marianas amusement
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NMC tourney raises over \$100K, reduces player fees

Due to what the NMC Foundation has termed an “unprecedented success” in fundraising efforts through corporate donations, its golf committee has voted to reduce fees for individual players in the upcoming NMC Foundation Open on June 26-27, 2004. Early player entrance fees will be reduced from \$200 to \$150, with a late fee from \$300 down to \$175 for anyone who signs up after June 23.

Golf great Bruce William Devlin will play in the two-day benefit tournament at Kingfisher Golf Links to help the Northern Marianas College Foundation raise funds for higher education.

“We have already raised more than \$100K in cash donations—actually doubling our goal of \$50K—so we have decided to pass some of this benefit back to the players,” said NMC Foundation president Jerry Tan. “With a pro like Bruce Devlin attending the event, we want to make sure that more people have the opportunity to play with this great golfer who is volunteering his time to help us raise money for the college.”

According to Tan, the organizing committee has also agreed to lower the price for a golf clinic that Devlin will teach as part of the fundraising activities on Friday, June 25. The fee will go down to \$60 from \$90 for a one-hour session, \$100 for a two-hour session and \$125 for the three full hours of the clinic, which will start at 1:00 p.m. at Kingfisher Golf Links.

A very accomplished golfer, Devlin turned professional in 1961 and is an 8-time winner of the PGA Tour. He won the Senior PGA Tour in 1995 and is also well known as a professional golf commentator. He has been involved in designing and building over 140 golf courses around the world.

“The chance to play and get some personal tips from Bruce is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for most of us, and certainly



FAS Moving & Storage donates \$1,500 to the Northern Marianas College in support of the 2nd Annual NMC Foundation Open fundraising event, which will be held June 26-27, 2004 at Kingfisher Golf Links. General Manager George M. Fleming, Jr., center, presents the check to foundation board members, left to right, Ivan Quichocho, David Atalig, NMC Foundation president Jerry Tan, and Michael Von Siebenthal. Golf great Bruce William Devlin will donate his time to play in the two-day benefit tournament to help the Northern Marianas College Foundation raise funds for the school.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

a first for Saipan. We’re greatly looking forward to welcoming Mr. Devlin to the island and are so pleased that he has generously agreed to join our tournament and offer the clinic,” said Tan.

A committee of Foundation board members and business volunteers has been soliciting corporate donations and planning this major event for the college for the past six months. The committee is co-chaired by businesspeople and NMC Foundation board members, including Jerry Tan, Ivan Quichocho, John Cox, David Burger, Lynn Knight, Youichi Matsumura, Michael Von Siebenthal, Joanna Pai, David Atalig, Reina Camacho and Tony Satur of NMC.

Entry forms and sign ups for the tournament and clinic are being accepted at NMC, Kingfisher Golf Links, the Saipan Tribune, and Century Hotel front desk. For anyone who has already signed up and paid at the original higher fees, the organizing committee has said they will reimburse the difference in cost during the first day of the event.

For more information, call the college at 234-5498, extension 1000/1007 or Tony Satur at 888-3324.

Red flag up on 3 beach sites

The Division of Environmental Quality has raised the red flag on three beach sites on Saipan after samples collected from these locations were found to contain excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria—enterococci—that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

The beach sites are Bird Island Beach, North Laulau Beach, South Laulau Beach.

DEQ said that the bacteria found on these waters can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

“However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public

health concerns,” said the agency.

However, in order to adequately address public health concerns, DEQ is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

The agency has also analyzed water samples collected from Managaha’s recreational beaches and storm water drainages and has declared the waters on the island safe for swimming.

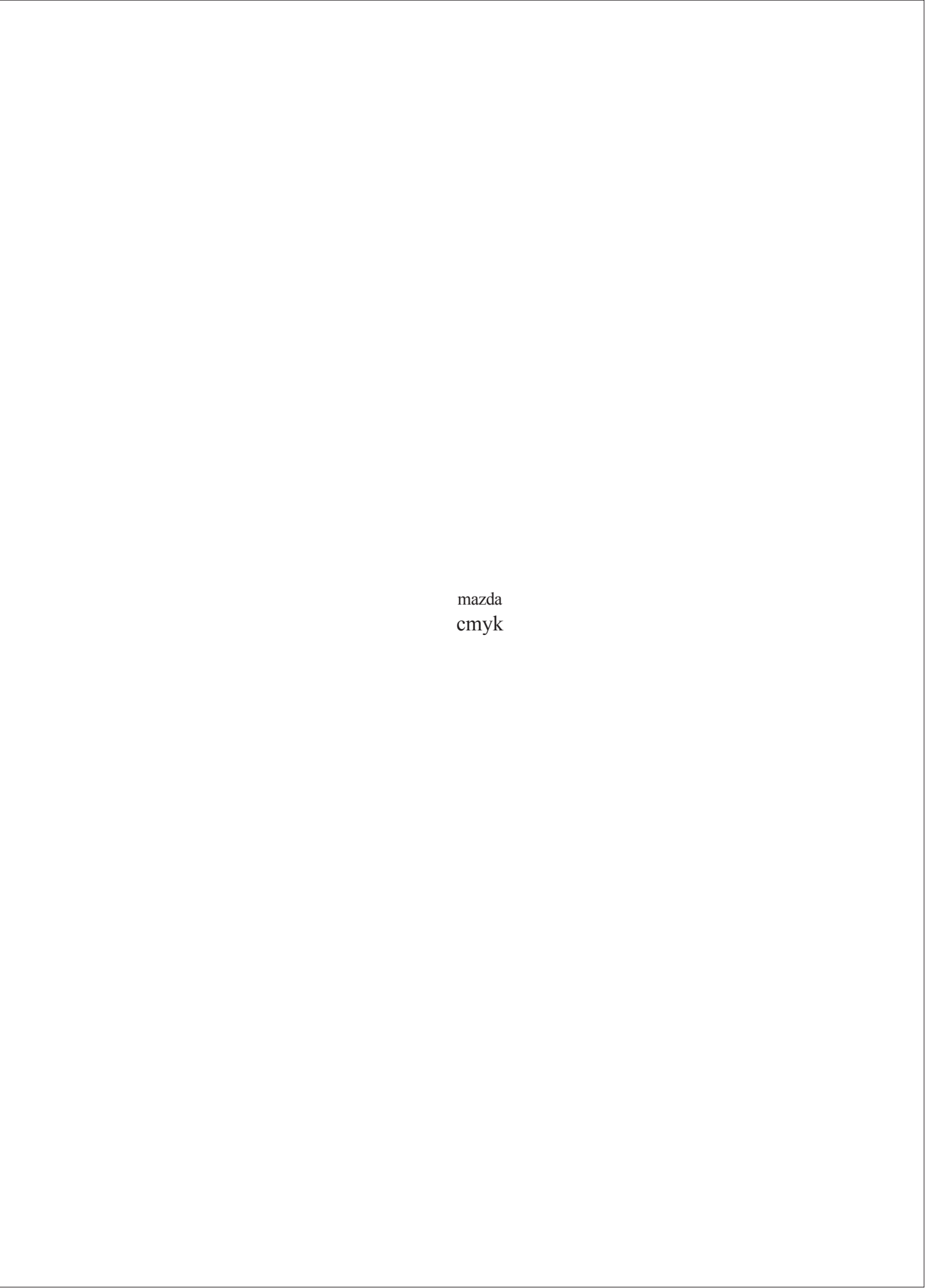
DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Saipan’s beaches every week.

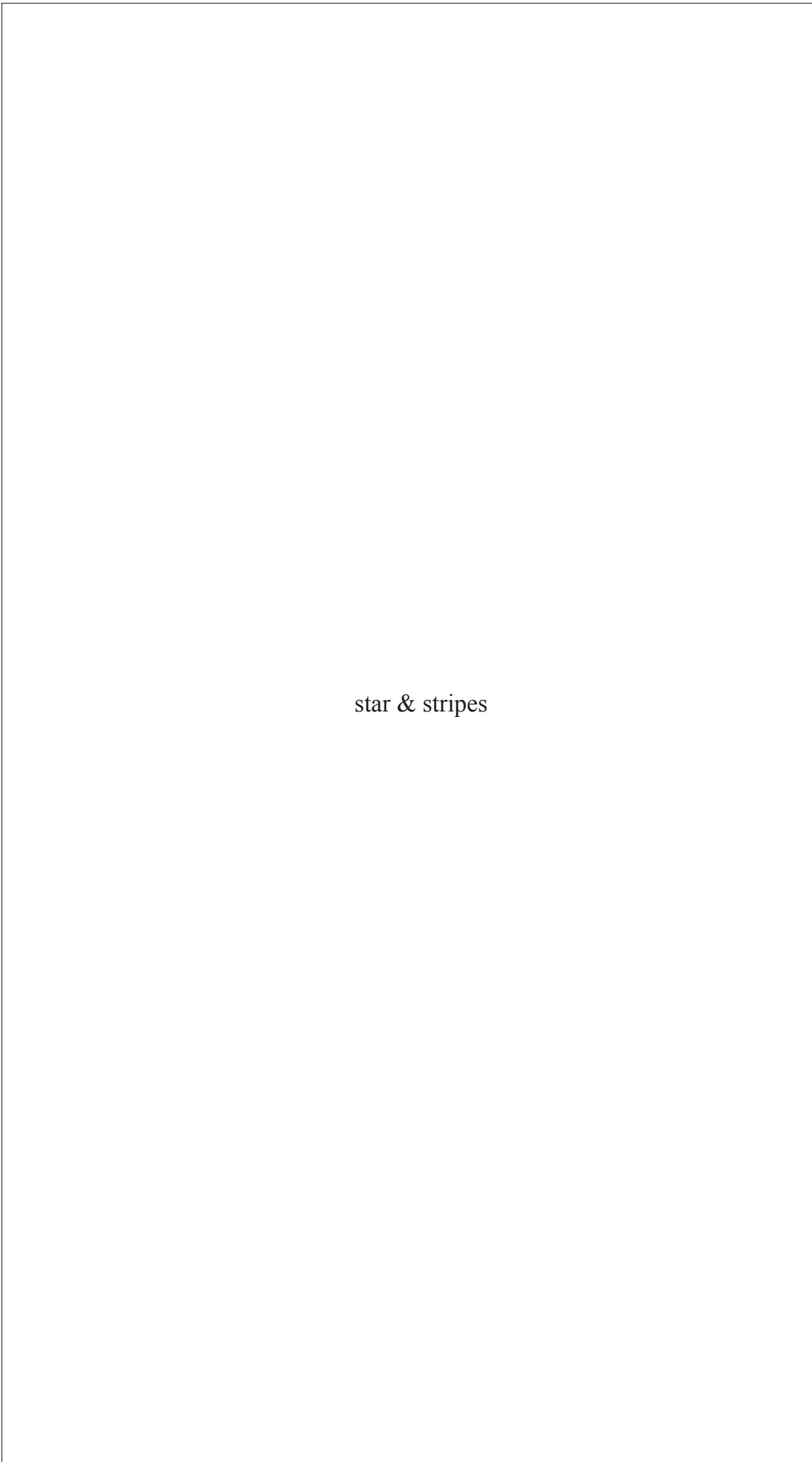
DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter.

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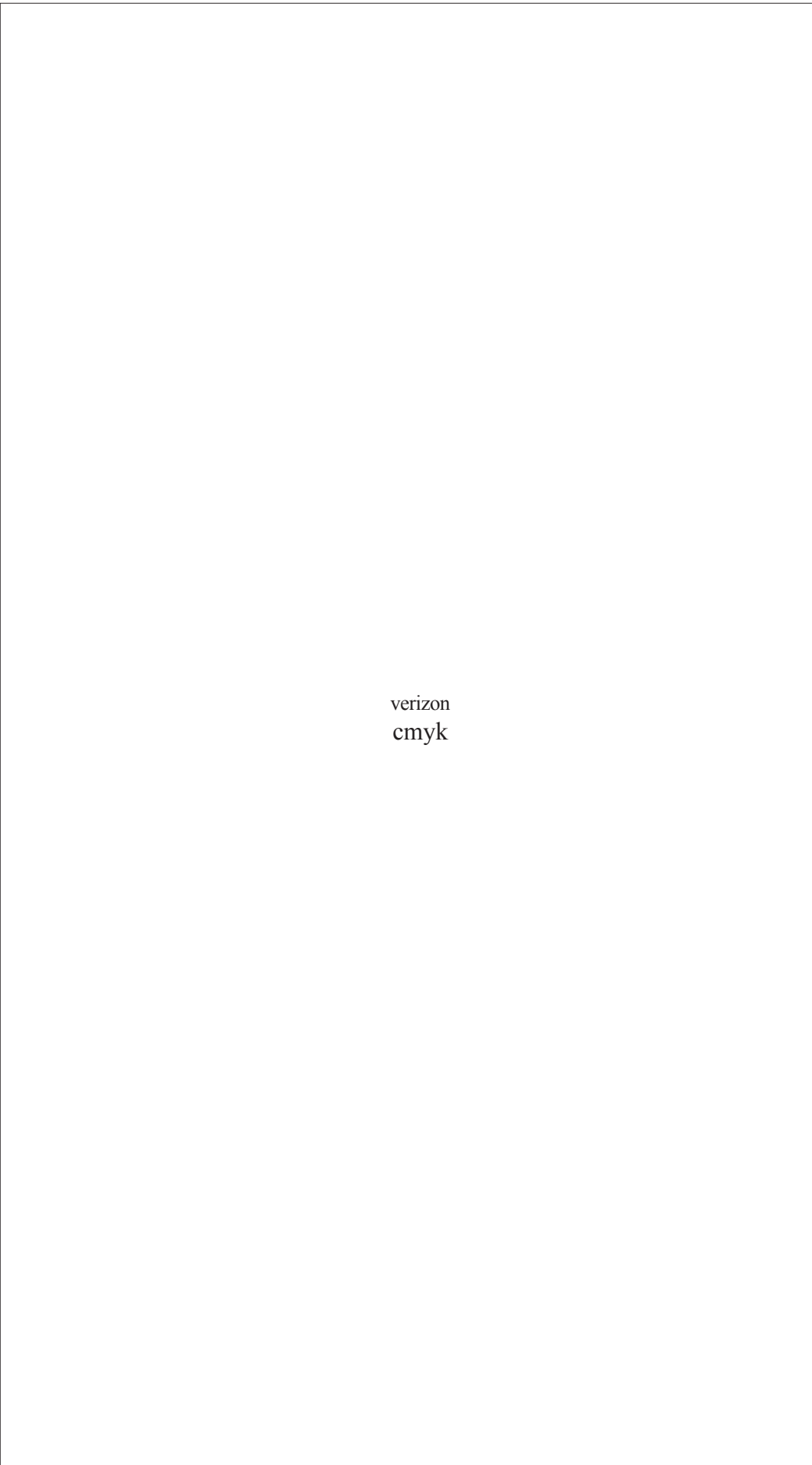
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Asia

Six killed in Pakistan and militant clashes

By Riaz Khan
AP WRITER

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani forces Wednesday fought off militants who attacked two military posts in a lawless tribal region near Afghanistan with rocket launchers and machine guns. One soldier and five militants were killed.

Also, a top official said security was strengthened at Parliament in the capital Islamabad because of the threat of a terrorist attack ahead of a visit by President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

The fighting in South Waziristan came days after a major army operation against al-Qaida suspects that killed at least 72 people. The battles showed the rugged region near the Afghan border is still far from secure.

In the first clash Wednesday, at least two militants and one soldier were killed when between 70 and 80 militants staged a night assault on Ladha Fort, a paramilitary post about 20 miles north of Wana, the main town in the region.

An official in Wana said on condition of anonymity the two militants whose bodies were

recovered after a three-hour gun-battle appeared to be Uzbeks. He said five soldiers were wounded. An army statement said that scores of militants were injured.

The militants “ran away leaving behind two dead bodies while they dragged away a few more dead bodies from the area,” the statement said.

It said they also left behind a small machine gun, a rocket launcher and grenades.

Later, three more militants were killed in a shootout in Shiringo, 22 miles west of Wana, after another military post came under attack, a senior security official said on condition of anonymity.

Security forces used artillery and other heavy weapons to return fire. They saw three bodies roll down from a nearby hilltop but have not retrieved them, fearing hostile fire, the official said, adding that no soldiers were hurt in the clash.

Hundreds of foreign al-Qaida-linked militants are still believed to be hiding in South Waziristan, along with supporters of Afghanistan’s former ruling Taliban regime. They are thought to include Arabs, Central Asians and Afghans.

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Bush outlines new Afghanistan initiatives

By DEB RIECHMANN
AP WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Bush on Tuesday called Afghanistan the “first victory in the war on terror,” yet both he and Afghan President Hamid Karzai said the nation remains on a long, rocky path toward peace and economic prosperity.

“Three years ago, the Taliban had granted Osama bin Laden and his terrorist al-Qaida organization a safe refuge,” Bush said, standing alongside Karzai in a Rose Garden so humid that the Afghan leader shed his cloak.

“Afghanistan is no longer a terrorist factory sending thousands of killers into the world,” Bush said.

The United States, which in recent months has increased its force in Afghanistan to about 20,000 troops, is helping to build the new Afghan national army and train new Afghan police and border patrol. The president, who is using the battle against terrorism as a centerpiece of his re-election campaign, listed five new ways America would help Karzai.

But he added: “The road ahead for Afghanistan is still long and difficult.”

Nearly 500 people have died in violence across Afghanistan so far this year. Many are victims of the Taliban-led insurgency; others have died in factional and tribal fighting

linked to the country’s booming drug trade.

The country’s illicit cultivation of opium poppies supplied almost three-fourths of the world’s opium last year and helps finance terrorists.

“The Afghan government is adamant, the Afghan people are adamant to fight this menace, to end it in Afghanistan and receive your help in that,” Karzai said.

Bush announced that the United States would:

- Launch a training program for newly elected Afghan politicians.
- Help print millions of new textbooks, build schools for girls as well as boys and develop a new \$4 million women’s teacher training institute in Kabul.
- Set up new cultural exchange programs.
- Pursue a bilateral trade and investment agreement.
- Dedicate \$5 million to fund training programs and grants for small business, including those run by women.

Robert Weiner, spokesman for the Office of National Drug Policy from 1995 to 2001, noted that curbing the cultivation of poppies was not on the list of initiatives Bush announced.

“They offered nothing against drugs despite its obvious importance against terror,” Weiner said.

“We need a real plan - eradication and enforcement with the help of our thousands of troops there,

with planes spraying and troops burning and chopping—to get the job done.”

Afghanistan’s first election since the United States drove out the Taliban rulers in 2002 is on track for September. Security and logistical problems postponed it from June. Karzai, who is president by vote of a grand council, under traditional Afghan practice, is running against a number of challengers.

Karzai denied that he’s made any political pacts with former Islamic militant leaders.

“No deals have been made,” Karzai said, adding that, as president, he needs to talk with Afghans from all backgrounds to assure peaceful, democratic elections.

Asked who would try fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar and bin Laden, whose al-Qaida network is blamed for the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington, Karzai said Afghanistan would consult other nations on how to bring them to justice.

“Osama and Mullah Omar have committed crimes against the Afghan people, against the people in the United States and against the international community,” Karzai said.

“They are wanted by the world conscience,” he said. “They have to be arrested and tried. And when they are arrested, we will consult the international community and find appropriate mechanism for their trial.”

CLUB JAMA



AP
President Bush, right, and Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai walk from the Oval Office to the Rose Garden at the White House Tuesday, June 15, 2004 in Washington.

S. Korea's ruling party talks of sending troop dispatch to Iraq

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Leaders of South Korea's ruling political party met Thursday to decide whether to support government plans to send 3,600 troops to northern Iraq to support the U.S.-led coalition.

The meeting follows appeals by President Roh Moo-hyun for cooperation from the Uri party after some party members demanded that the long-delayed plan to dispatch troops be reconsidered.

The National Security Council is also expected to meet this week to decide details of when the troops would travel to Iraq, and where they would deploy. South Korea reportedly plans to send the troops to Irbil in northern Iraq this summer.

Roh has held firm on the plan despite the uproar over the prisoner abuse scandal involving U.S. troops in Iraq, as well as

the unstable security situation in many parts of the country. Irbil is in a relatively quiet area.

South Korea had originally planned to send troops to the northern Iraqi town of Kirkuk as early as April. The plan was canceled amid concerns it would involve combat operations, in violation of a parliamentary mandate for peacekeeping duties only.

"In the early days, when we decided to send troops, there was a burden that our troops had to assist security directly or indirectly and take defensive actions, though the troops were only for reconstruction," Roh told Uri party members on Wednesday.

"But the safety of the troops has increased as the destination changed to Irbil from Kirkuk," Roh said. He was quoted by South Korea's national news agency, Yonhap.

China opens embassy in Dominica

ROSEAU, Dominica (AP)—China has opened an embassy in Dominica, its eighth in the Caribbean as it competes with Taiwan for diplomatic allies in the region.

Chinese Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Zhou Wenzhong said Wednesday his country is ready to assist Caribbean countries as they fight to compete in the global market.

"As developing states, China and Caribbean countries face the daunting task of developing their economies and meeting the challenges of economic globalization," he said. "We believe that by helping other developing countries, China will benefit in terms of equipment export and technology and trade."

Dominica joins Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Suriname, Antigua and Barbuda,

and Trinidad and Tobago as formal diplomatic allies of China.

Dominica recently established ties with China, which has promised some EC\$300 million (US\$112 million) in aid to the country.

Taiwan responded by severing diplomatic connections with the cash-strapped island, one of the poorest in the region.

The Caribbean, with its small island nations and hard-pressed economies, long has been a dueling ground for China and Taiwan, which accuse each other of "dollar diplomacy" to win votes at the United Nations.

Though democratic Taiwan is self-governing, communist Beijing insists it's part of China and shouldn't have formal relations with other countries. The two sides split amid civil war in 1949.

Bomb hits NATO vehicle in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A bomb hit a car used by NATO-led peacekeepers in northern Afghanistan Wednesday, killing four civilians including two children, police said.

The attack came a week after 11 Chinese workers were shot in their beds in the same province, and a day after President Bush lauded Afghanistan as the "first victory in the war on terror."

Police said the bomb showered shrapnel on the SUV as it passed through a busy market in Kunduz, 150 miles north of the capital, Kabul.

"A mine was detonated on the edge of the road by remote control," Kunduz police chief Mutaleb Beg said. "The driver lost control and ran the car into a wall."

The Afghan driver, as well as

two children about 10 and an elderly man who were passers-by, were killed, Beg said. Another youngster was injured, he said.

A spokesman for the peacekeepers, squadron leader Sean McFetrich, said the vehicle was clearly marked with the international force's green insignia and German flags.

He denied Beg's suggestion that it was part of a military convoy from the 250-strong German contingent, which patrols the region. He said the car was being taken to a local garage for servicing when the attack occurred.

Insurgents, active mainly in the south and east of Afghanistan, have vowed to sabotage the country's first post-Taliban national vote later this year and

appear to be expanding into the relatively stable north.

The bloodshed is hampering U.N. efforts to register voters in the south and east, but both the U.S. military and President Hamid Karzai say the vote should go ahead as planned in September.

Kunduz is the only place outside the Afghan capital where the 6,400-strong NATO-led security force has a presence, though it plans to set up at least five more so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams in time for the elections.

NATO nations have been slow to pledge extra soldiers and equipment for the rollout, but the force's commander said Wednesday he expected an order to send troops to the areas around the northern cities of

Mazar-e-Sharif and Maymana.

"I do believe it's still possible to set the conditions for elections here," Lt. Gen. Rick Hillier said.

The 11 Chinese road workers and an Afghan guard were killed June 10 in Kunduz province in the worst attack on foreign civilians since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001.

Five members of medical relief agency Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, including three Europeans, were fatally shot in the remote northwest on June 2.

Another explosion early Wednesday damaged the office of Afghanaid, a British relief agency, in Faizabad in northeastern Badakhshan province, slightly injuring an Afghan guard.

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90 sickened by food, tea in S. China

BEIJING (AP)—At least 70 people became sick in southern China after eating sandwiches from a bakery chain. Twenty others were hospitalized after they drank herb tea containing pesticide, the government said.

The customers of 100 Point Artistic Bakery in Meizhou, a city in Guangdong province, complained of stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and fever, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Most were in stable condition after treatment at the Meizhou City People’s Hospital between Sunday and Tuesday, Xinhua said, citing doctors.

Local authorities have suspended the sale and production of the suspect food and have organized a recall. An investigation was under way, Xinhua said.

Meanwhile, more than 20 people were in stable condition in the city of Beihai in the Guangxi region after drinking the herb tea, Xinhua said.

The victims—who ranged in age from 3 to 60 years old—began vomiting and feeling dizzy after drinking the tea from a street vendor Tuesday night, it said.

The report did not give the exact number of people sickened.

Xinhua said investigators found traces of pesticide in the tea but it was not immediately clear if the chemical had been put in the beverage on purpose.

Bush elevates military ties with Pakistan

MacDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AP)—Following through on a promise, President Bush on Wednesday elevated U.S. military ties with Pakistan, granting it benefits enjoyed by only a handful of countries outside the NATO alliance.

Bush designated Pakistan as a major “non-NATO ally” of the United States.

The new status, which administration aides said recognizes Pakistan’s help in the war on terrorism, makes the nuclear-armed central Asian country eligible for priority delivery of defense materials.

The designation comes amid strengthening U.S.-Pakistani relations and was made as Bush addressed U.S. forces here - and in Iraq and Afghanistan via a satellite hookup.

The benefits of this status include eligibility to have U.S.-owned stockpiles of defense articles in Pakistan outside U.S. military installations. It also makes Pakistan eligible to use U.S.-provided foreign military financing to commercially lease some defense articles.

When Bush’s intentions were announced in March by Secretary of State Colin Powell during a visit to Islamabad, it drew immediate protests from India, Pakistan’s neighbor and rival.

India does not enjoy such status.

Singapore police crack down on prostitutes

SINGAPORE (AP)—Police are cracking down on a surge in Chinese prostitutes plying their trade in Singapore’s historical Chinatown district, a police spokeswoman said Thursday.

The action follows a flurry of local media coverage depicting avaricious young Chinese women aggressively soliciting older Singaporean men. One tabloid ran front-page coverage Tuesday headlined “So Bold!”, with photos of the “China gals.”

“Police are aware of the situation at Chinatown and have conducted raids there,” police spokeswoman Rachel Yeo told The Associated Press. “We will continue to monitor the situation closely and take enforcement action.”

Prostitution is legal in this tightly ruled Southeast Asian country of four million, but sex workers must confine themselves to certain districts of brothels. Prostitutes must also register with the authorities, and get regular health checks.

Soliciting for sex, however, is against the law. First-time offenders face fines of up to 1,000 Singapore dollars (US\$582), and repeat offenders

can be fined up to S\$2,000 (US\$1,165) and also jailed for six months.

Last year, Singapore police arrested 2,301 foreign women for vice offenses—such as soliciting—throughout the island, down from 3,422 arrests in 2002, according to police figures.

“The level of vice activities in Singapore is largely under control,” Yeo said.

Japan shipping home Antarctica garbage

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese researchers in Antarctica are getting serious about cleaning up the half-century’s worth of garbage piled up at their base on the southernmost continent, an official said Thursday.

Building materials, cast-off snow vehicles and fuel drums have collected at the research base since the first expedition was launched in 1956. By 1998, the garbage weighed about 500 tons (550 short tons) and research teams began chipping away at the pile to clear it.

Now, those efforts are being accelerated in an international effort to clean up Antarctica. Japan’s Science Ministry hopes to send the remaining 337 tons (370 tons) of garbage home within four years, ministry official Suguru Suzuki said.

Tokyo has sent research teams to Antarctica almost every year since 1956. In the past, ships went to Japan’s Showa Base mainly to deliver supplies—not to pick up garbage, Japanese newspapers reported.

Japan’s 62 scientists currently stationed at Showa are studying ozone holes, sea life and world climate and weather patterns.

Antarctica, with well-preserved ice averaging 1,820 meters (6,000 feet) thick, is one of the few places where scientists can examine climate change over time because chemicals from the air have been frozen in layers of ice year after year for centuries.

Nepal bus accident kills at least 12

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—A passenger bus veered off a mountainous highway west of the Nepalese capital Wednesday, killing at least 12 passengers and leaving many more injured, police said.

The bus drove off the Prithvi highway at Aghorbhanjyang, about 50 miles west of Katmandu, and rolled about 100 yards to the bottom of the hill.

The bus was on the road—which has several hairpin turns - because the main highway out of Katmandu was closed for repairs.

Police official reached over the telephone near the accident site said rescuers were still pulling the injured from the wreckage. The official said they had recovered 12 bodies.

There were about 50 passengers on the bus as it had picked up people from another bus which had engine problems.

The official said they did not know the reason for the accident but visibility was poor and roads slippery due to the rain.

Accidents are common on Nepal’s poorly maintained highways, where most of them passes through mountainous areas with hairpin turns. It is often hit by landslides.

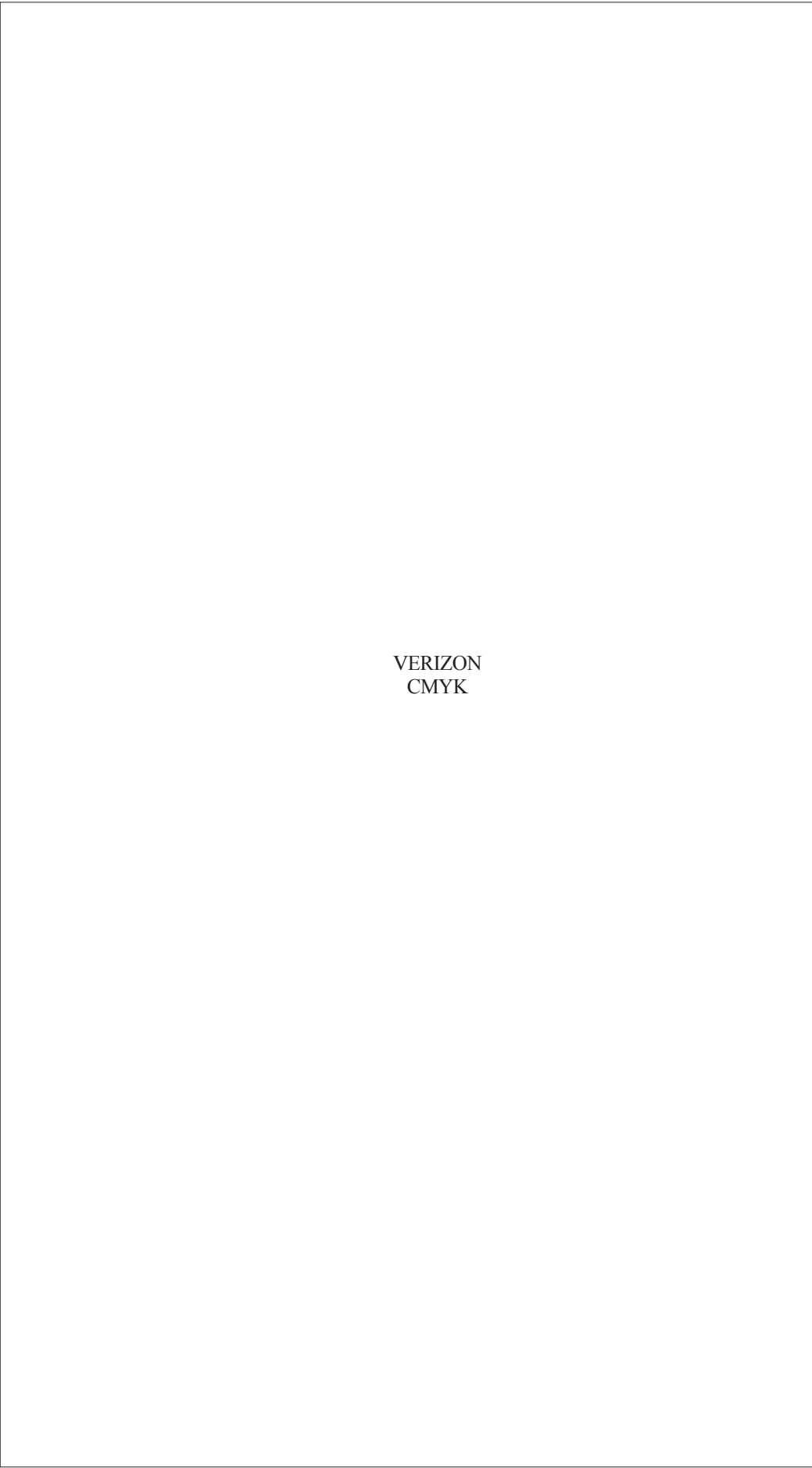
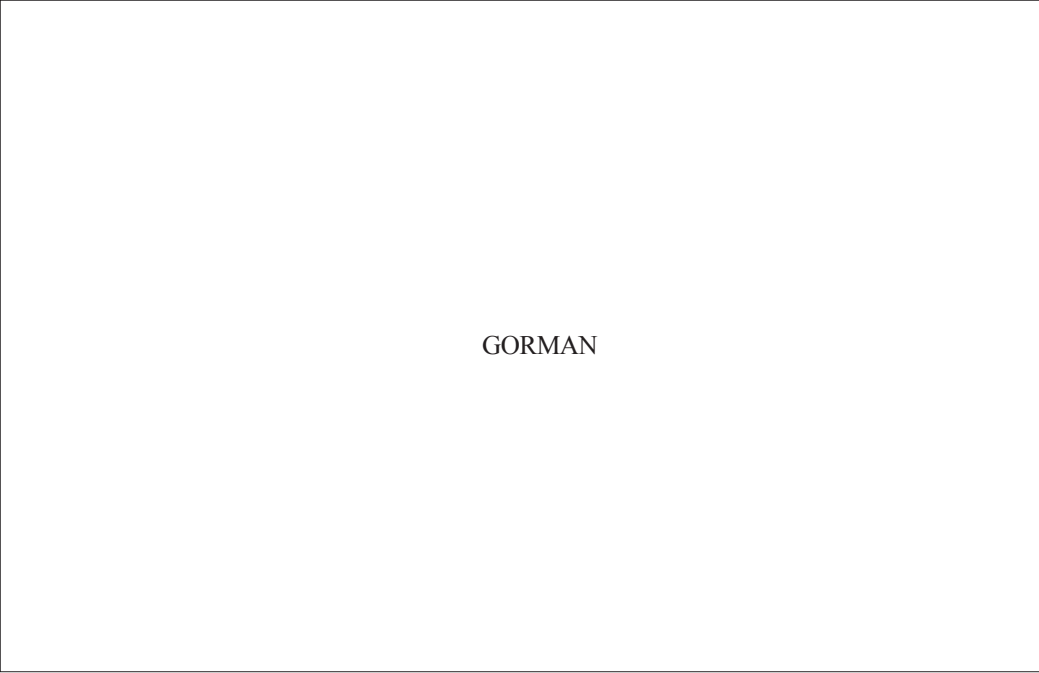
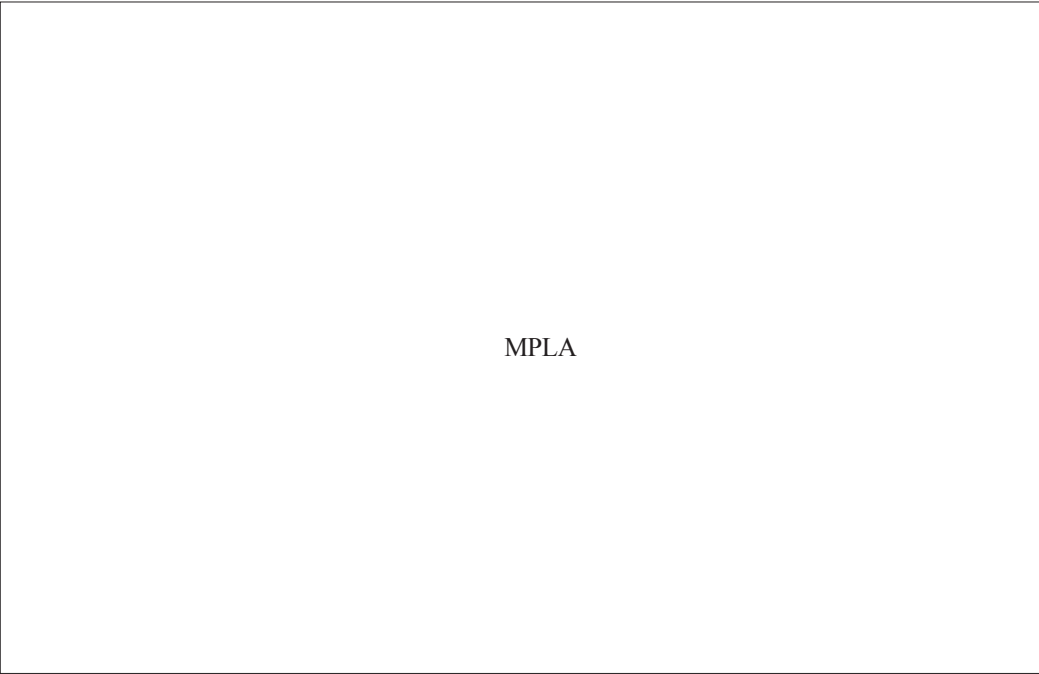
Indian state, rebels announce cease-fire

HYDERABAD, India (AP)—Authorities in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh announced a three-month cease-fire Wednesday in their campaign to crush communist rebels whose attacks have killed more than 6,000 people over two decades.

The People’s War Group has demanded a six-month truce as a primary precondition for negotiations. The organization is one of the most powerful rebel groups in India after the Islamic militants fighting in the northern state of Jammu-kashmir. It was not clear if the rebels had accepted the cease-fire offer.

Members of the PWG, which is active in five southern and eastern states of India, often attack rich landowners, saying they exploit landless farm workers.

On Tuesday, the rebels said they were ready for talks aimed at ending more than two decades of bloodshed. The group also demanded guarantees for the safe passage for its leaders attending the talks.



World

Labor party backs Sharon government

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel’s opposition Labor Party backed Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in a crucial parliamentary vote Wednesday, a day after he was cleared of corruption charges—boosting Sharon’s plan to pull out of the Gaza Strip.

Labor was sending signals of readiness to join Sharon’s government to promote the Gaza move, but there was stiff opposition from party members on both sides. Also, a poll showed the Israeli public was not behind a Sharon-Labor team.

Sharon lost his parliamentary majority while ramming the Gaza withdrawal proposal through his Cabinet, dismissing one pro-settlement faction, while part of another one

walked out in protest.

The plan calls for removing all 7,500 Jewish settlers and the military from Gaza by the end of 2005. Four small settlements from the northern West Bank would also be evacuated.

Sharon and his Likud Party had for decades championed settlement construction. Sharon’s sudden about-face, favoring removal of settlements in Gaza and the West Bank for the first time since Israel captured the territories in the 1967 Middle East war, angered his own power base but won praise from his parliamentary opponents in Labor.

To shore up Sharon’s coalition, Labor pledged to abstain in votes of no confidence in the

parliament, keeping the government afloat though it lacks a majority.

On Wednesday, Labor took its backing a step further, abstaining on an opposition move to dissolve the parliament and call elections. The proposal was voted down 53-13 with 15 abstentions. Traditionally, all opposition factions vote in favor of such bills.

Under Israeli law, a motion to call elections cannot be filed again for six months, removing some of the pressure on the shaky government, though it could still be vulnerable to no-confidence motions.

Labor had said it would not consider joining Sharon’s government until the attorney general

ruled on a bribery case involving the premier. On Tuesday, the case was closed for lack of evidence. Afterward, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres hinted strongly that he wants to guide his party back into the government.

“The Labor Party has only one consideration—what will promote peace, what will hasten the evacuation of the Gaza Strip,” Peres said.

However, some Labor lawmakers are opposed, preferring to try to topple the government. Sharon and Labor teamed up during Sharon’s first term as premier from 2001 to 2003, but the government broke apart over the

issue of funding settlements.

Also, Likud opponents of the Gaza pullout plan oppose bringing in their ideological opponents from Labor, which favors evacuating most of the settlements in the West Bank as well as the ones in Gaza. Sharon’s plan is to trade the small Gaza settlements for a strengthened hold over large parts of the West Bank—provoking stiff Palestinian criticism.

A poll published Wednesday in the Yediot Ahronot daily showed that Israelis are doubtful about reconstituting the Labor-Likud team.



Sharon

According to the Dahaf poll, only 37 percent supported Labor’s entering the government, while 54 percent were opposed. The poll questioned 500 Israeli adults and had a margin of error of 4.4 percentage points.

Also Wednesday, Israel contractors were forced to halt construction of a section of a West Bank separation barrier after clashes erupted between soldiers and hundreds of Palestinian demonstrators. Witnesses said soldiers fired tear gas, but no injuries were reported.

Israel says the barrier is necessary to stop Palestinian suicide bombers, but Palestinians complain it dips deep into the West Bank.

Rebels holding terror suspect seek ransom

DAKAR, Senegal (AP)—The expected arrest in the Sahara Desert of a man believed to be one of North Africa’s most-wanted terror suspects is snagged over a rebel group’s demand for more money, an official close to the case said Wednesday.

Amari Saifi, an Algerian militant linked by Western officials to al-Qaida, is thought to be in the hands of a Chadian rebel group that captured him in March.

Diplomats said earlier that the rebels had contacted Algeria, France, Germany, the West African nation of Niger and the United States about handing over Saifi and followers captured with him.

The official of a country involved in the case, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the rebels were holding out for the “highest bidder.”

Saifi, the No. 2 of a violent armed Algerian Islamic extremist group, is wanted in the killing of 43 Algerian soldiers and the Sahara kidnapping of 32 European tourists, both last year.

A former Algerian paratrooper, he is better known by his nom de guerre, al Para.

The rebel group, the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad, claimed to have captured Saifi in March after an intense battle near Chad’s border with Niger.

Algerian troops had hoped to take custody of Saifi in the first week of this month. Algerian forces traveled then to what was thought would be a handoff point in the remote desert of Niger, which neighbors Chad, authorities said.

But the official confirmed Wednesday that Saifi’s handoff has yet to happen.

The Chadian rebels apparently delayed the transfer in hopes of a payoff from Germany, which is seeking Saifi in connection with the kidnapping of its nationals, the official said.

“The stuff with the Germans didn’t come through,” and no breakthrough has occurred since, the official said.

In Berlin, the German Foreign Ministry said it was playing no part in the current dealings over Saifi. “We can only conduct extradition proceedings with governments,” the spokesman said, on customary condition of anonymity.

Protesters cut power to Eiffel Tower

PARIS (AP)—French power workers cut electricity to the Eiffel Tower and President Jacques Chirac’s residence in western Paris on Wednesday to protest the government’s plans to partially privatize state utilities in an effort to raise money.

Electricity was shut down at the presidential Elysee Palace, several government ministries and the Champs-Elysees avenue for about 15 minutes Wednesday afternoon. Some stores evacuated shoppers.

At the Eiffel Tower, tourists did not notice the outage because a backup electric plan kicked in, officials at the monument said.

The power outages affected homes and offices in western Paris, including The Associated Press bureau. Power authorities

said 52,000 clients were hit.

The CGT trade union said the outages were part of attempts to force the conservative government to drop plans to transform Electricite de France and Gaz de France—known by their acronyms EDF and GDF—from state agencies into limited companies.

The government has promised to keep at least 70 percent of EDF, but it hopes to raise billions of dollars for the heavily indebted French state by selling a minority stake in the power utility. Parliament began debating the plan a day earlier, with France’s opposition left fighting the reform.

Protesters are worried that opening the door to outside investment will ultimately put utilities in private hands, threatening their jobs and retirement benefits.

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Europe keeps pressure on Iran over nukes

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—Europe’s three major powers shrugged off Iranian threats of retaliation Wednesday and put the final touches on a tough resolution rebuking Tehran for continued nuclear cover-ups.

The new draft seen by The Associated Press retained strong language designed to maintain pressure on Iran a year after the International Atomic Energy Agency began to probe nearly two decades of its suspect nuclear program.

Delegates at a meeting of the IAEA’s 35-nation board of governors described the draft, written by France, Britain and Germany, as strongly worded. Slight modifications were

meant to appease nonaligned nations traditionally allied with Iran, the delegates said on condition of anonymity.

“The substance remains the same,” one delegate said. “The heat is still on.”

A new clause “recognizing the inalienable right of states” to develop peaceful nuclear programs was one of the modifications. Iran insists its nuclear ambitions are restricted to generating electricity and not making bombs.

Another was the insertion of the word “voluntarily” in asking Iran to reconsider testing of a uranium conversion plant and construction of a heavy water research reactor—projects with

possible weapons applications.

But the resolution kept key passages expressing “concern” and “serious concern” about Iran’s foot-dragging or “deploring” its spotty record of cooperation with the IAEA investigation.

Suggesting agreement was close, the delegate said the draft could be formally submitted to the meeting by Thursday.

Iran has suspended its uranium enrichment program but has refused to scrap it altogether. France, Britain and Germany have promised to provide Tehran with nuclear technology if and when all suspicions about a weapons program are put to rest.

Ex-Colombia rebel describes recruiting

WASHINGTON (AP)—A former Colombian rebel leader who defected last year said Wednesday his one-time colleagues used “fascist-like techniques” to win new recruits for their goal of transforming the country politically and economically.

Carlos Alberto Plotter, who once served as a commander of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, said he believes negotiations are the best way to end 40 years of civil war in his country.

Plotter, who turned himself in to the government in May 2003, spoke to a gathering at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

He said the FARC, the rebels’ shorthand name, recruited peasants at gunpoint and “actually subjugated the population through force.”

Speaking through a translator, Plotter said peasants in some areas had a choice of joining the FARC or being forced from their homes.

“The FARC is far from achieving their goal of transforming society,” he said.

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has stepped up pressure on the FARC since assuming office two years ago. The latest report on Colombia by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human

Rights criticized all parties to Colombia’s conflict—the government, the FARC, the ELN leftist insurgents and rightist paramilitary forces.

“The human rights situation remains critical,” said the report, released in March. The war claims about 3,500 lives every year.

Plotter took encouragement from political developments in countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, where, he said, traditionally underrepresented majority populations now have more political clout.

He said he was unaware of any FARC ties to Cuba, Venezuela or the Irish Republican Army.

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Science & Technology

Life & Style

Fans mark fictional centenary of ‘Ulysses’

By SHAWN POGATCHNIK
AP WRITER

With straw hats, bonnets and lace-trimmed dresses—but barely a mutton kidney in sight—thousands of James Joyce fans on Wednesday immersed themselves in the fictional 100th anniversary of “Ulysses.”

“Bloomsday” festivities, commemorating the one-day wandering of Leopold Bloom into every nook and cranny of a long-lost Dublin on June 16, 1904, have grown each year. The current “ReJoyce Dublin” festival featured more than 80 exhibits and events across the capital devoted to Joyce and his masterwork.

None was more traditional than Wednesday’s breakfast at the James Joyce Center, a Georgian town house in the shadow of the writer’s Jesuit-run alma mater, Belvedere College.

“I’ve brought my best walking shoes. I’m going to cover the whole route Bloom did—unless the pubs stop me,” said Stephen Hammond, a visitor from England who set off with a map of Dublin annotated with “Ulysses” landmarks.

On an unusually warm and blazingly sunny day, hundreds of tourists in T-shirts and shorts stood in the street alongside aficionados sweating in heavy Edwardian costumes, waiting their turn for breakfast. Inside, an elite

crowd—among them President Mary McAleese—dined in the shade.

The event recreates Episode 4 of the mammoth novel, as Bloom cooks a hardcore breakfast of organ meats for himself and his adulterous wife, Molly.

“Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls,” goes the famous passage, which was read aloud by local celebrity guests and diners alike. “He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencod’s roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.”

No sign of that on most people’s

plates Wednesday, though.

“We’ve found that mutton kidneys aren’t terribly popular. We have some available, but they tend to end up in the bin,” said Helen Monaghan, a grandniece of Joyce who runs the center. “People much prefer their ‘Bloomsday’ to be washed down with a breakfast pint of Guinness.”

Indeed, the many pubs still standing today that were featured in the “Ulysses” odyssey of Bloom and Stephen Dedalus were the targets of special attention Wednesday, particularly Davy Byrne’s off the posh Grafton Street shopping precinct, where drinkers poured into the street and surrounded

a few horse-drawn carriages ferrying sun-soaked Joyceans.

Later, thousands were expected to celebrate “Ulysses” with an evening of parades, dancing and drama on O’Connell Street, the main Dublin boulevard.

In the southern coastal suburb of Sandycove, where the novel opens in a Napoleonic-era tower, breakfast led on to a daylong street party dominated by seafood, wine and a few impromptu readings from the opening of “Ulysses.”

Joyce briefly lived in that tower in Sandycove in 1904 before he fled Ireland for literary inspiration in the Adriatic port of Trieste, Paris and the Swiss city of Zurich, where he died in 1941 at 58.

BOOK REVIEW

The Queen of the South,
by Arturo Perez-Reverte

Fesperman is a staff writer for The Sun and an author whose latest novel, *The Small Boat of Great Sorrows*, won Britain’s Ian Fleming Steel Dagger Award for best thriller.

Reviewed by DAN FESPERMAN
THE BALTIMORE SUN

The hero who runs the show in an Arturo Perez-Reverte novel tends to be of a genteel type, with a noble pedigree or suitably refined job title—art expert or fencing master, museum curator or rare-book hunter. When he kills or dies, it is often while pursuing something noble, or at least intellectually intriguing, such as a historic nautical treasure, a forbidden manuscript or lost honor.

Partly for that reason, critics and marketers seem determined to label Perez-Reverte—a Spaniard who has built a deservedly sizable American following—as an author of “intellectual thrillers,” a title promising brainy entertainment even while suggesting that this isn’t quite the stuff of literary greatness.

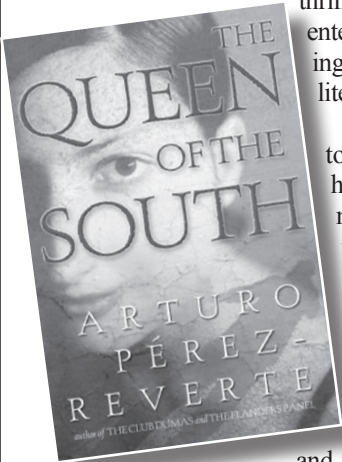
All the more surprising, then, to discover that the woman holding the title role of his newest novel, “The Queen of the South,” is Teresa Mendoza, a drug lord from common stock in rural Mexico.

Teresa is a girl of the streets who rises to wealth and power partly on luck and largely on pluck. Emotionally durable and insatiably curious, she flees for her life across the Atlantic to Morocco and Spain, taking her education where she can find it.

Her teachers are addicts and smugglers, hit men and grimy mechanics, corrupt politicians and shady attorneys. Any heart of gold in this crowd has been deeply tarnished by violence and vice. Their dialogue is coarse, their actions rough and unsparing, and the elder sage in the crowd is a Russian Mafioso, Oleg Yasikov, who confides to Teresa that the one necessary skill in their business involves “looking at a man and instantly knowing two things. First, how much he’s going to sell himself for. And second, when you’re going to have to kill him.”

Yet, even with such roughhewn raw materials, and despite a somewhat meandering beginning, “The Queen of the South” captivates the reader with a thoroughness and sophistication that Perez-Reverte’s previous novels never achieved. In addition, Teresa emerges as his fullest and most intriguing protagonist to date. She might also be the most sympathetic, no mean feat considering she has to win our hearts and minds while living by rules that are as appalling as they are harrowing.

Breaking away from the comforts of his usual “smart set” seems to have stretched Perez-Reverte’s range. Without his usual safety net of instantly likable roles and instantly admirable goals, he has to step more carefully into the heart and soul of his characters, and the nimbleness shows.



marpac
+red

Host washes houseguests right out of her bathroom

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My fiancée and I recently traveled out of town to visit my best friend, “Frank,” who recently married his sweetheart, “Gail.” Frank graciously invited my fiancée and me to stay at their apartment. This had been our arrangement prior to his marriage, and I accepted the offer.



Each morning, my fiancée and I got up early and took our morning showers before our hosts. As we finished our showers, Gail would run into the bathroom with an armful of cleaning supplies and scrub it from ceiling to floor.

Dear Abby

We are not dirty people. We didn’t make a mess in their bathroom. We were a little offended, but said nothing. Was this her way of telling us she didn’t want us staying there? Should we stay at a hotel next time we visit?

FORMER HOUSEGUEST,
NORTH OLMSTEAD, OHIO

DEAR FORMER HOUSEGUEST: I’d say she conveyed that message pretty clearly. Considering the fact that they are newlyweds, I think you’d all be more comfortable were you to book a room at a nearby hotel or motel.

□ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: I am a 42-year-old woman. To those around me I seem to have everything—great kids, a beautiful home, a career and a pretty good life. But deep down I am miserably lonely.

I divorced a cheating spouse eight years ago. I haven’t been in a serious relationship since.

I have concentrated on my children, my career and my financial portfolio. But now that my kids are older and I have a lot of idle time on my hands, I miss being in a relationship.

I have tried singles groups, chat lines, and I’m even attending more social events, to no avail. I take good care of myself and look good for my age. But the 20- and 30-something competition makes it hard, if not impossible, to attract the kind of man I’d like to be with.

What advice have you for someone my age who has been benched for years and is ready to play ball again?

LONELY IN GEORGIA

DEAR LONELY: Only this: Stop selling yourself short. You have stability and life experience to offer, and a man with an eye for quality will appreciate it. Don’t be discouraged; dating is a hit-and-miss game, regardless of age. You are only in the fourth inning, so get off your rusty-dusty, stay out there and keep on pitching.

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DEAR ABBY: I am 15. My grandfather recently committed suicide. He asked to be cremated. Since there was no funeral or visitation, I feel like there was no closure. Is there any way I can tell my grandfather goodbye?

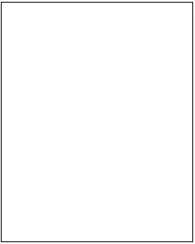
NEEDS CLOSURE
IN GEORGIA

DEAR NEEDS CLOSURE: Please accept my sympathy for your loss. I’ll tell you a technique that has worked for many other people. Write your grandfather a letter. Put into it all the things you wanted to say to him but didn’t have a chance to. Put it aside for a week, then re-read it and “send it” to your grandfather by burning it. I hope it works for you, too.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

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